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Mary Devin  
*Kansas State University*

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# From Vision to Implementation: KELI's First Year

Dr. Mary Devin

*Dr. Mary Devin, a former Kansas superintendent, is Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at Kansas State University, and is the Executive Director of KELI.*

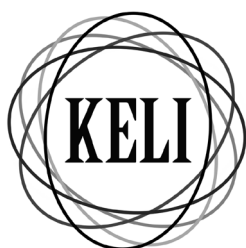
***Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.***

– Henry Ford

Great ideas alone won't produce large-scale change. Careful attention to the implementation phase of the change process is essential. The Kansas Educational Leadership Institute (KELI) moved from planning to implementation on March 30, 2011 when planners approved the proposal for what was to become a statewide systematic support system for the recruitment, development, and retention of quality leaders in schools and school districts in Kansas and possibly beyond. Those involved in the planning and those charged with implementation knew they were creating something out of the ordinary for two reasons. First, collaboration of this magnitude involving so many major state agencies and organizations interested in educational leadership was truly unusual in Kansas. Second, while mentoring programs for teachers and even principals were not unusual, planners had been unable to find a model for a system of mentoring and inducting first year superintendents in any other state.

At that time the Kansas licensing process required first year superintendents to participate in a year-long mentoring/induction program. However, while the requirement was enforced by submission of a document of completion signed by the mentor, there were neither standards nor content specifics describing what the mentoring/induction experience should include. The result was tremendous disparity in program quality across the state. The priority for KELI's first year was mentoring and induction of superintendents serving in the position for the first time, in a context adding quality and consistency to the existing system for licensure of Kansas school district leaders. Fortunately, among the collaborating partners were those with the knowledge and the authority to make this happen.

A grand opening celebration on May 12, 2011 introduced KELI's ambitious agenda with much ado, but KELI's beginnings were modest by any measure. As pledged to the KELI planners, the Dean of the College of Education provided KELI



Kansas Educational Leadership Institute

with two staff positions. The executive director had years of experience as a school superintendent and was familiar with state department of education programs. The experienced events coordinator was part-time, but recognized for success in working with other school related service programs in Kansas. The College of Education's commitment to the initiative was further demonstrated by the personal involvement of the educational leadership department chair and the associate dean. It is unlikely KELI would have survived the challenges of the first few months without their active participation and guidance.

KELI's physical presence emerged as an additional label on the event coordinator's door. Administrative assistants in existing assignments in other offices took on additional chores as needed to provide clerical support for KELI. In the third month a graduate assistant was assigned to KELI.

The greatest majority of operational funding for that first KELI year came from the Dean of the College of Education who set an amount aside in the college budget for that purpose, in addition to the salaried staff time already committed to KELI during the planning process. Other resources came from a grant of \$36,479, which KELI received from the university's Division of Continuing Education as part of that division's efforts to encourage new program development. With the \$500 fee each district would pay to receive KELI services, there was sufficient funding for implementing the priorities for KELI's first year.

Even with immediate attention to implementation, time was short; the duty year for Kansas superintendents begins on July 1. In spite of that timeline, KELI staff and supporters shared a sense of optimism that mentoring/induction support would be available as new superintendents began the school year. Identifying the number and location of new leaders and securing sufficient qualified mentors to serve them was intended to be the first goal for KELI staff. What they discovered was that a number of steps were required to establish KELI as an institute within a major university bureaucracy before services could actually be offered.

### **Establishing an entity**

KELI staff learned that an independent center of service operating inside the university, but steered by collaborative efforts of five outside organizations, was something new. It was concluded that KELI would be classified in the legal structure as a collaborative institute, rather than a legally recognized partnership. Even though personnel in all university offices encountered were extremely helpful and supportive of KELI's needs, answers to questions about how KELI could be authorized to do business were not readily available and often had to be carefully crafted so as to be compatible with university practice for situations sometimes only remotely similar.

Several interchanges with the university director of purchasing and the university attorney were necessary. Statements of expectations and job descriptions became legal documents between KELI and mentors, who had to be established as independent expert contractors in order to comply with bidding regulations. Mentees were required to sign a formalized agreement to participate in the KELI program. In addition,

budget-monitoring offices needed to open fund accounts to allow KELI to conduct business transactions.

The executive director and the events coordinator learned that KELI would not be able to receive money or issue payment for any expenses until all these pieces were in place. In spite of the need to match new superintendents with mentors by July 1, it would be months later before KELI was able to receive payment for programs in place, compensate mentors for services, or pay any operating expenses incurred. Fortunately, because this was a collaborative venture, partners explained the unusual situation to participants and those who were to become KELI mentors made themselves available to new leaders on their own. They also volunteered to work on details of the mentoring program immediately, although it would be September before KELI was officially authorized to conduct business transactions. Patience and good assistance from all those involved in the university and beyond eventually led to completion of all requirements and the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute was authorized to do business.

While moving through establishment requirements, operational work was underway. KELI staff prepared materials and meeting folders and designed stationery that displayed a KELI logo comprised of six intersecting ovals, one in each of the primary colors of a partner logo. A footer on all products displayed the individual logo of all partners as a border, a constant reminder of the collaborative spirit behind KELI.

### **Building an identity**

A sound business operation was the first step, but it was just as important for KELI to establish credibility in the professional community. Those efforts were underway immediately after planners agreed to collaboratively support the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute. A presentation by planners to the state board of education in early May 2011 previewed the result of the planning process and the coming implementation of a support system for leadership. The grand opening celebration for KELI was hosted by the College of Education a few days later in the newly constructed Leadership Studies building on campus. All superintendents in the state, elected officials, and other dignitaries were invited to the introduction of KELI to the professional community. A corporate benefactor funded a nationally recognized guest speaker and the Dean of the College of Education and the state Commissioner of Education delivered special remarks to emphasize the importance of this event. Executive leaders from KELI partners endorsed the collaborative undertaking. A united message had been sent to the education community; this was an important step toward the shared goal of systemic support for the recruitment, development, and retention of quality leaders in schools and school districts in Kansas.

Superintendents were given more information about KELI programs at summer meetings of professional organizations. First year and veteran superintendents who attended completed an informal questionnaire asking them for suggested topics to explore in deep learning sessions and for time-frames most convenient to attend such sessions outside local districts. This information was useful in planning professional learning events later in the KELI year.

KELI staff communicated personally with each new superintendent statewide, extending the invitation to participate in the KELI mentoring/induction program. Representatives of KELI presented informative sessions at annual conferences of the state department of education, the association of school boards, and the united school administrators, introducing the new service to membership across the partner organizations. Information was provided for partner newsletters and other communications. A KELI website displayed photos of KELI events and continued to invite qualified professionals to apply for mentoring assignments in future years. Emails regularly updated partners and members of the KELI service audience of events and current progress on long-term goals.

There was an additional major incentive to enroll in the KELI program. KELI's mentoring/induction program satisfies the state requirement to move from an initial leader license status to the professional leader endorsement, a necessary step in the career advancement of all education administrators. The state department of education sent a letter endorsing the program to each first year leader, which the state defined to include those new to the chief executive seat as well as those in Kansas for the first time, with limited experience outside the state. Districts were charged \$500 to secure the KELI mentoring/induction services for their executive leader—a fee well below the cost of providing such a service and an amount the state department of education agreed to reimburse to the district upon the superintendent's successful completion of the KELI program. This scholarship arrangement allowed districts to access quality support for leadership development without cost.

### Addressing priority one

In spite of procedural difficulties and delay in the capacity to conduct regular business, KELI leaders continued to sense the urgency of beginning work immediately on priority one—mentoring/induction of first year superintendents across the state's 284 school districts. The executive director immediately began contacting eligible mentors exploring their interest in working with KELI, but it was some time before the number of first-year position holders was finalized because superintendent vacancies were often like dominoes. Filling one position opened another, and the last vacancy sometimes produced a first time leader. Unexpected late resignations extended the turnover process into mid-July when the last opening was filled (which turned out to be a first-year-in-Kansas superintendent). Almost unbelievably, KELI managed to secure enough mentor power to support 26 first year Kansas district leaders by the first week in July. Details of the mentoring/induction program itself were not yet articulated, but the mentor/mentee connection had begun.

In terms of establishing program details and describing completion requirements, it was clear from the start that the "one size fits all" approach would not work. In Kansas, a state license for district level leadership is required for any administrative position in the central office. An "initial license" is the entry level of licensure. Holders of this license have three years to meet requirements for adding a "professional endorsement" to the district leader license. Many first year superintendents

previously served in district level positions such as program directors or assistant superintendents that gave them experience with leadership beyond the school building. First year superintendents from previous district positions would already have earned the professional endorsement. This was almost always the case in larger districts where multiple central office positions were common. On the other hand, of the 26 first year leaders in the KELI mentee group, fourteen were principals the previous year without previous central office experience and holding the entry-level leader's license. This happened most often in small districts, and there were many of those in Kansas. Looking further into differences in district size, in the very smallest of districts the superintendent was also a building principal. These dual superintendent/principal positions would need yet a different set of mentoring/induction supports from the KELI program. Finally, the decision by the state department to require a year of mentoring and induction for superintendents in their first year in Kansas, whether or not they had any previous central office experience outside of Kansas, added a fourth dimension of differentiation. The KELI mentoring/induction support system would have to support first year leaders falling into four categories:

- 1) Superintendents in the first year as an administrator in any district position (no central office experience, initial license status, seeking professional license endorsement)
- 2) Superintendents in the first year as chief executive (experience as directors or assistant superintendents, professional license status earned in previous district assignment, interested in license renewal)
- 3) Superintendents with limited experience as chief executive in another state (first year in Kansas, initial license status in spite of some outside Kansas experience, seeking professional license endorsement)
- 4) Superintendent/Principal dual assignments (both district leader and the principal for at least one elementary, secondary, or K-12 school, initial license status, seeking professional license endorsement).

Mentors would work with mentees in all four categories and would need to adjust to the varying challenges of leading in districts from less than 100 students K-12, to a large district with over 10,000 students.

The published job description announcing KELI mentor openings included responsibilities of mentoring and coaching superintendents, participating in development of KELI procedures, and assisting in the assessment of the effectiveness of KELI programs. Qualifications required of applicants aspiring to be mentors included demonstrated mentoring skills, successful experience as a district leader in Kansas, experience in program development and interest in working with from one to five mentees. Information about the scope of work and how to apply for mentor positions was sent to related professional organizations to share with members, posted on appropriate placement centers in the state, and posted on the KELI website. These efforts produced a limited number of excellent candidates. However, best results came from direct KELI staff and partner contacts with respected recent, but not current, district leaders. KELI was looking for individuals with a proven

track record who were committed to building leadership capacity for the future for Kansas schools.

For compensation purposes, mentors were contracted experts with the amount of compensation determined by the number of mentees covered by the contract. Each mentor received the equivalent of one-mentee-credit beyond the actual number served for responsibilities related to program planning, delivery, and assessment. Mentors indicated in applications how many mentees they would be willing to serve and the executive director constructed the final assignments. Mentor location became somewhat of a guiding factor in recruiting mentors and as mentor/mentee assignments were made. KELI hoped to find qualified mentors residing in proximity to the new leaders who were literally spread across the four corners of the state. Travel expenses were reimbursed by KELI and multiple district assignments took distance into consideration in order to reduce windshield time for mentors, but it was impossible to avoid considerable travel time for some. When all mentor and mentees were placed, mentor assignments ranged from a single district, to as many as five different district locations.

The mentoring design recommended by the planning team called for mentors who were not currently in superintendent positions because of the time required for mentors to be in mentee districts. However, due to the short timeline and the number of new superintendents to serve, in the first KELI year, two of the nine mentors were sitting superintendents. Off-setting the concern about time outside the district, both were quite experienced in their present assignment, had participated in the KELI planning process, and were familiar with the concepts and expectations underlying KELI's services. Both agreed to mentor two new superintendents located in geographic proximity. While using current superintendents was not the first choice for KELI leaders, they were pleased to have an opportunity to assess the feasibility of using practitioners as mentors, should that become a necessity in the future. To complete the mentor corps for July, two college leadership department staff members who were former superintendents each mentored one new leader for the first two months until the final mentoring position was filled.

#### **Details of the KELI Mentoring/Induction Program**

Directions from the planning committee outlined major concepts to guide the mentoring/induction program, but KELI staff and KELI mentors needed to work out the details of a successful program. The final product must carry out guidelines from the planners and appropriately recognize experiences earlier in the year already underway. After the description of the program was complete and had been reviewed by the state department, the KELI Steering Committee approved requirements for successful completion of the KELI mentoring/induction program on September 30, 2011. Mentors then shared requirements with the new leaders who would be responsible for meeting them. Because they had been kept apprised of likely components as the list was constructed and because credits were given for pertinent early-in-the-year activities already completed, this late start did not handicap first year leaders.

The planners recommended mentors make on-site visits twice each month and make use of available technology for additional interactions as needed. In practice, mentors and mentees discovered after only a couple of months that one on-site visit was preferred by the mentees, who were struggling with time management issues. Email and telephone emerged as the almost exclusively used technology, although there was a brief but unsuccessful effort by one group to use Google Plus. Technology outcomes most likely reflected a combination of the particular individuals involved and the lack of training provided for mentors or mentees for increasing technology skills.

Another part of the mentoring/induction design called for mentors to observe the new leader in designated performance situations and to introduce mentees to state board of education meetings, the legislature, and the state superintendents council. Mentees were also required to participate in professional organization conferences and deep learning sessions focusing on leadership development. Mentors monitored and provided feedback on those experiences. Mentors turned in monthly logs documenting contacts with mentees, including site visits and other interactions. When all logs had been turned in and tallied for the year, collectively, mentor time with mentees exceeded 700 hours. Overall, the interaction between mentor and mentee was consistently rated as the most effective element in the KELI mentoring/induction program.

#### **Mentor Training**

On more than one occasion during planning that preceded implementation of KELI, planners discussed the difference between mentoring and coaching and which of the two would best support new leaders. In practice, mentors found they needed to perform as both mentor and coach and they needed to know when to engage in either role. They wanted to focus on building leadership capacity, not creating dependence, and they recognized coaching training would help them accomplish this. The mentors had confidence in their personal mentoring skills as a result of years of personal experience in the chief executive position, but they recognized they were not as skillful in using effective coaching techniques. This observation on the part of the mentors themselves was very important to the success of KELI's first year.

Neither planners nor KELI staff had been able to locate a state model for mentoring superintendents, but there were multiple options available for training coaches. KELI mentors and staff explored several possibilities and reached consensus on contracting with certified coaching trainers from Coaching for Results, Inc., whose trainers had experience as Kansas school administrators. The trainers agreed to customize their regular training model by incorporating the concepts of leadership coaching for school administrators from the work of Karla Reiss (2007). To prepare for the scheduled two-and-a-half days of training, mentors read *Leadership Coaching for Educators: Bringing out the best in school administrators* (Reiss 2007). Training days were spaced to allow mentors to practice application of the new skills between sessions and to self-assess their increasing proficiency. Considering the long years



of experience the mentors represented, KELI leaders were apprehensive about how the role of learner would be accepted by these competent professionals. Mentors, however, were apt students, eager to learn the new skills and open to participating in the training activities. This training was a critical factor in setting the KELI mentoring/induction program quality beyond existing mentoring practices in the state. Sharing these training experiences also produced a bond among the nine mentors, allowing them to get to know each other and to appreciate individual talents within the group. Beyond the group sessions, trainers offered mentors personal phone coaching opportunities. Three mentors participated in this voluntary extension of the coaching training.

Mentors also met quarterly to assist staff in putting in place routines and procedures for conducting KELI's business and addressing its goals effectively. Timelines, forms, accountability records, routine communication with mentees, and guidelines for operations in general were developed with the intent of forming efficient and convenient practices. Mentors assisted with assessment of current services and with outlining the process for reporting mentee progress to the state department for licensure requirements. Mentors were an important influence and an invaluable resource in the development of these operational practices.

### **Governance**

The master plan guiding KELI implementation included a governance structure that was a careful blend of the voices of the six collaborating partners with deliberate attention to two-way communication with practitioners in the field. As the major funding source, the College of Education leadership was given oversight for fiscally related matters. Major decisions about programming rested with the KELI Steering Committee, which was representative of the founding partners. Advisory Council, representative of the field KELI was serving, was designed to provide two-way communication links with practitioners. Partners appointed the respective members to serve on both bodies.

### **The Steering Committee**

Partners had direct representation on the KELI policymaking body. Planners gave the College of Education two seats on the steering committee, since it was the primary funding source. Other partners had one position each. KELI was fortunate that individuals appointed to the partner seats on the steering committee were both well informed and committed to the mission of supporting leadership development. The state department official who had originally opened the conversation and had been a key contributor throughout the planning process agreed to assume that partner seat on the steering committee herself. The Associate Dean of the College and the Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership accepted the College positions on the steering committee. The presence of these leaders on the top KELI governance structure was critical because this meant voices of the key decision makers related to financial resources and to professional compliance matters were present in the discussions regarding KELI's future. The Kansas Leadership Center

chose to leave its steering committee position vacant and to participate on only the advisory council for the first year. The association representing school boards appointed its key staff member who was responsible for leadership development and the state superintendents' professional organization appointed a superintendent who chaired a sub-group during the planning process and was part of the discussions shaping KELI. The state umbrella association of united administrators appointed its current president who was also president of the state association for secondary school administrators. This individual brought a principal's perspective to the conversation, which was important because KELI services were expected to expand to the building level in the third year. The KELI Steering Committee was situated well for guiding implementation of the plan approved on March 30, 2011, and its members were connected to important communication links with KELI stakeholders. The first KELI Steering Committee meeting was a conference call on May 23, 2011, following the grand opening session. Its first face-to-face session followed a few weeks later on June 16.

The final two seats on the KELI Steering Committee were set-aside in the governance plan to be elected at large by the KELI Advisory Board from its membership. First, however, the steering committee needed to establish by-laws to guide its own operations including details regarding the establishment of the advisory council. These bylaws were self-adopted rules for the regulation and management of KELI business and programs. The steering committee approved bylaws on September 30, 2011 that officially established the name of the organization and its mission:

The mission of the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute is to collaborate and share resources to support professional growth of educational leaders needed in Kansas schools for the 21st Century.

The steering committee set dates to meet quarterly or when needed throughout the year and agreed to have the executive director chair meetings. There would be no officer positions. With bylaws in place and partner appointments finalized, the last two steering committee members were elected at the first meeting of the advisory council.

The steering committee also approved an ambitious five-year plan for the organization. After the initial year priority of mentoring/induction of first year superintendents, in year two planning would begin for mentoring/induction of first-year principals. The priority for the third year would be implementation of the service for principals. Deep learning opportunities for new and veterans expand to include both superintendents and principals in year four and by year five will target new and veteran leaders at all levels.

Adoption of the KELI five-year plan was significant beyond giving direction to program growth over time. Based on the elements present in this approved plan, the state department of education recognized KELI as an area professional learning center and recognized KELI's program as officially meeting the mentoring/induction required of new superintendents to move from initial to professional license status. As an area professional learning center, KELI was further authorized to

award professional development credits that could be used by any administrator toward the five year license renewal cycle.

### **KELI Advisory Council**

The newly formed seventeen-member KELI Advisory Council met for the first time on November 29, 2011, and agreed to meet quarterly throughout each year. Membership on the advisory council was designed to reflect the demographics of educational leaders in Kansas. The partner representing the superintendents' professional association named five superintendents from districts of different sizes and geographic areas. The united administrators organization designated one principal from each elementary, middle, and high school levels. Other partners appointed two members from their organizations at large. Two advisory council members (one superintendent and one elementary principal) were elected by that body to serve also on the Steering Committee. Perhaps because the list of prospective members now extended beyond members of the planners circle, assembling the advisory council took longer than KELI staff expected. Partners wanted to find representatives who could contribute ideas and skills, but they also wanted leaders willing to spend the time KELI would need.

### **Deep Learning Series (Let's Talk)**

Planners made it clear that development of leadership skill did not stop with first year executives. Deep learning opportunities for both new leaders and veterans were part of the vision shared by the partners. KELI offered three such sessions during the second semester of the first year. Topics selected emerged from discussions on current issues during advisory council meetings and from mentors interactions with new leaders. KELI marketed the series of sessions as "Let's Talk" because each brought together experts on current high priority issues and veteran district leaders who could talk about what was being done related to these issues in real districts of varying sizes and resources. The first session brought together legal advisors and school leaders. The second featured implementation of technology initiatives, and the third Let's Talk session focused on preparing for implementation of the common core state standards.

All three sessions were rated very high in evaluations completed by those attending. The interaction between experts and practitioners was important, but leadership teams attending indicated the information shared by their peers was even more useful. Both first year and veteran leaders took home examples of what was possible based on success in districts not unlike theirs.

The goal for these sessions was to establish KELI's reputation as a professional learning center. Since there was no budget for wide spread marketing, facility costs, or for securing nationally recognized experts as presenters, these first year sessions were not expected to draw large numbers or to bring in excessive revenue. Still, making these events successful involved more than choosing good topics and presenters. Partners contributed in-kind services such as providing the location without charge, making their own experts available as presenters at no cost, publicizing the sessions in newsletters and electronic databases, and distributing registration infor-

mation. KELI used resources from the Division of Continuing Education grant and contracted with that division to manage registration and meeting logistics. Partner involvement, DCE support, and the KELI events coordinator's experience with event management produced the standard of excellence KELI sought for the debut in this area and managed to produce a sufficient level of attendance to yield a slight positive revenue gain.

### **First year accomplishments**

The scope of this account is to describe the first year of operation of the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute. Evidence of its effectiveness will be presented in later writings. In general, however, it is clear that in its first year the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute accomplished positives on which to build future year programs.

- All but one of the first year superintendents in Kansas in school year 2011-2102 chose to participate in the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute and received support for individual professional growth in leadership from July through June.
- Twenty-six first year superintendents completed the initial KELI mentoring/induction program year and by the end of June had received well over 700 hours of mentor time as logged collectively by the nine KELI mentors.
- These first year leaders were introduced to the larger educational community in the state and beyond. They participated in deep learning sessions and began forming networks with peers that are likely to continue for many years.
- By completing the KELI program, thirteen first year superintendents met the requirements for adding the district leader professional endorsement on their teaching credential.
- Thirteen other KELI participants who had added the professional endorsement while in other district level positions, earned credits toward renewing current credentials in the future.
- Mentors were pleased with the results of their work with new leaders. One mentor described the year as a great personal professional development for both mentees and mentors.
- KELI was established as an area professional learning center. Over one hundred superintendents from across the state participated in KELI's first series of deep learning opportunities.
- Procedures were put in place for year two of support for new year superintendents.

### **Looking ahead**

A substantial measure of the success of any first year operation is the foundation it establishes for future years. In that respect, there are many KELI positives. KELI is emerging as a source of leadership support for school and district leaders. Communication links are growing between KELI and the broader educational community. Even turnover in the key state department position working with the initiative has not

detracted KELI from its progress on implementing the vision shared by the planners.

Leadership must learn not only from what works, but also from what doesn't work. KELI staff learned a great deal from its Year 1. There were no disasters, fortunately, but there was much that could be built on to become more effective and efficient in Year 2.

- Procedures are being refined, timelines adjusted forward to the extent possible.
- Getting a support system in place by July 1 will continue to be challenging because of the operational timelines for changing position holders in Kansas school districts.
- The less intense support system for Year 2 district leaders will attract more participants if Years 1 and 2 are combined in a longer-term relationship and presented to leaders and boards of education earlier.
- Finding dates for events with no conflicts with other activities is impossible. It is better to select a date early and work through conflicts as encountered. Flexibility and collaboration will be essential components of planning.
- Communication with district leaders is extremely important; mentors are the number one link with those in the mentoring/induction program.
- Early efforts place much priority on the relationship piece of the mentor/mentee connection. As KELI becomes more established, more time and resources can be focused on bringing research and best practice to practitioners.

Kansas education is in a time of great transformational change in almost every area. Accountability systems, performance evaluation, and accreditation requirements are all changing. It is important for KELI deep learning activities to be centered by the topics of greatest current concern to leaders. But KELI is about leadership and what makes KELI different is bringing experts and practitioners together to focus on the leadership that makes best practice and compliance initiatives work in real school districts.

A meaningful recognition of the role KELI is expected to play in the future is its appearance on the College of Education portion of the university's *2025 Strategic Direction Action Plan and Alignment* document (p.5)

#### **Key Activities and Goals #4:**

**Provide quality service learning and international experiences of students and faculty and to increase service to communities through systematic engagement of students and faculty (e.g. KELI, PDS, and the military (Theme IV)**

Point 2. Support the development and growth of the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute (KELI)

N. Establishment of KELI opportunities for new school leaders [T1-1]

Ongoing support of KELI program and demonstrated impact of KELI on participants and their districts [T1-1]

In many ways KELI staff and supporters accomplished more that first year than they expected. Some had suggested it would take a year of preparation before actual implementation could start, but planners wanted leaders in the field to receive support as quickly as possible. Mentors' skill and commitment produced meaningful support throughout the entire school year; a major improvement in the support for educational leadership development statewide. The support and active involvement of key decision makers across the partner organizations turned a year of planning and creating into a year of immediate productivity and promise for the future. 📖

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#### **Conclusion**